

Development Issues and Problems of Selected Agency in Sorsogon, An investigative study

Alberto Naag Naperi

Administration Department, Sorsogon State College, Sorsogon City, Philippines

ABSTRACT : *The study venture on the developing issues and problems of selected agency in the province of Sorsogon with an end-view of identifying solution towards achieving effective delivery of services to the public. The agencies covered by the study are the employers of the students enrolled in Public Administration 512 subject in the graduate school program of the Sorsogon State College 1st semester SY 2016. Guided by a structured matrix questionnaire and checklist, the class spearheaded by the assigned focal person per identified respondent-agency conducted a focus group discussion covering sequentially the issues and problems besetting the organization. It likewise pursued how does it affects the management & performance of the office and ultimately identifying possible solutions out of the issues and problems. Result revealed that most pressing problems and issues of the selected agency in the province of Sorsogon covers; (a) understaffed, (b) poor communication, (c) poor implementation of the policy, and (d) poor performance feedback mechanism in the system.*

KEYWORDS : *Development issues and problems, selected agency, Investigative study, Management and administration*

I. INTRODUCTION

The general public now a day is always looking for a good if not excellent and better service delivery. It became a source of stress by almost all of the members of the community if the services that they are receiving from concerned agencies specially those delivering frontline services are not doing their work expeditiously and that the services they received is below the standard required for them to deliver. More frustrating oftentimes is that public service is subjected to personal condition and gain. Worse, employees are so unprofessional that norms and ethics are totally disregarded. RA 9485 known as the “Anti-Red Tape Act” which was approved in June 2, 2007 is a set of rules to improve efficiency in the delivery of government service to the public by reducing bureaucratic red tape, and preventing graft and corruption. This has been laid down to improve efficiency and productivity in government service. The very purpose of it is to ensure that service deliver to the public will maintain its standard and effectiveness. Although, only government agencies are sanctioned and covered by this Act but private agencies are likewise providing and adopting a system that improves the delivery of their services. Since, service delivery is a prime factor in the success of business establishments, this matter has to be given utmost attention most specially the attitudes and working relationship of the employees. Business enterprise succeed because the customers are satisfied with the services being offered, hence they are being patronized and their business tribe and goes beyond difficulties. Likewise, in government service, clientele is becoming happy if they are being served well and satisfactions engulf the entire system as no remorse can be heard but all praises to the government agency concern. However, if the expected services have not been afforded negative feedbacks will always be heard. This is where the idea of looking into the issues and problems and identify possible solutions out of these problems come into play, thus pursued this investigative study.

II OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the research is to identify issues and problems of the selected agency in Sorsogon, its effect in the management and performance of the office, and offered possible solution in order to continually improve the services given to the public in accordance with the requirements of RA 9485 otherwise known as the “Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007.

III METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method is used by the researcher in identifying the issues and problems of selected agencies in Sorsogon identified as subject of this investigation. These agencies are the employers of the students enrolled in SSC Graduate School taking up PA 512 with a subject description development issues and problems in Public Administration.

The class of twenty-one (21) students in PA 512 has purposely identified ten (10) agencies among the twenty-one (21) agencies of their employ as the respondents of the study. The selection was based on the most basic services being delivered and those identified are; SORECO, LGU Juban, Sorsogon Provincial Hospital, Philippine Statistics Authority Provincial Office, Sorsogon State College, Social Security System, Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office, City of Sorsogon (LGU), DAR- Municipal Office, and DENR. These agencies were chosen as the respondents of this study on reason that all of them are delivering basic services to the public and therefore are required to abide by R.A 9485 otherwise known as ‘The Anti-Red Tape Act’ which policy provision shall serve as the legal standard framework in the conduct of this investigative study. A focal person was assigned for each of the identified agency-respondents which serve as the research enumerator, and with the aid of a guide matrix questionnaire and checklist which was reviewed by the experts of faculty in the graduate school program and was tested to the selected key officials of the College before its adoption. The checklist of issues and problems was clustered into three. The first cluster was on employees’ relations and working attitudes. The second was on internal operation and core process. The third was on monitoring and feedback mechanism. The clustering was based on the compliance of the anti-red tape act. Focus group discussion was conducted using the said tested questionnaire and checklist in every agency-respondent and has generated the following information; the issues and problems of the agency; how these problems affect management & performance; and probable solutions and recommendations to solve the issues and problems. Information gathered were tallied and discussed.

IV RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The issues and problems generated from the identified agency respondents were clustered into three categories and the clustering was based on adherence and compliance within the norms of government agency which was previously identified during the review and finalization of the structured questionnaire and checklist. The first category deals with the employee’s relations and working attitude that covers the code of conduct and ethical standards in public service. The second and the third category were on internal operation and core process, and monitoring and feedback mechanism respectively which covers the Anti-Red Tape Act.

The issues and problems;

On Employees Relation and Working Attitudes: The agency-respondents had identified eight common issues and problems besetting their respective offices that fall under category covering ethical standard in public service – the employee’s relation and working attitudes. Figure one shows that all company respondents have an issue on lack of staff or understaffed to perform tasks towards the achievement of the agency’s Vision, Mission and Goals. The next major problem they have is tardiness and absenteeism including unprofessionalism of their employees. While 50% of them claimed that overloading or overworked employees also created problems that affects work attitude and employees’ relation. Although, majority of them agreed that overloading or overwork is the result of lack of personnel or understaffed to perform regular duties and responsibilities of the agency.



Figure 1. Issues and problems identified on employee’s relation and working attitude

Other issues and problems identified such as late salary, gossiping in the work place, favoritism, online game during office hours and texting are relatively minor, although possess negativity in the work place but occurrence of such issues and problems are not widespread among the respondent's agency. At the most only three agencies suffered issues on late salary and gossiping while only one agency where favoritism and online gaming happens in the work place. The respondent agency suffering from favoritism issue opined that the practiced suppressed improvement and development of the personnel and employees affected by the system feel dissatisfied and started to become unproductive. Favoritism is a menace to the public service so that all officials, managers and administrators alike must observe equality, fairness and impartiality in all level of transactions such as but not limited to appointments and promotions.

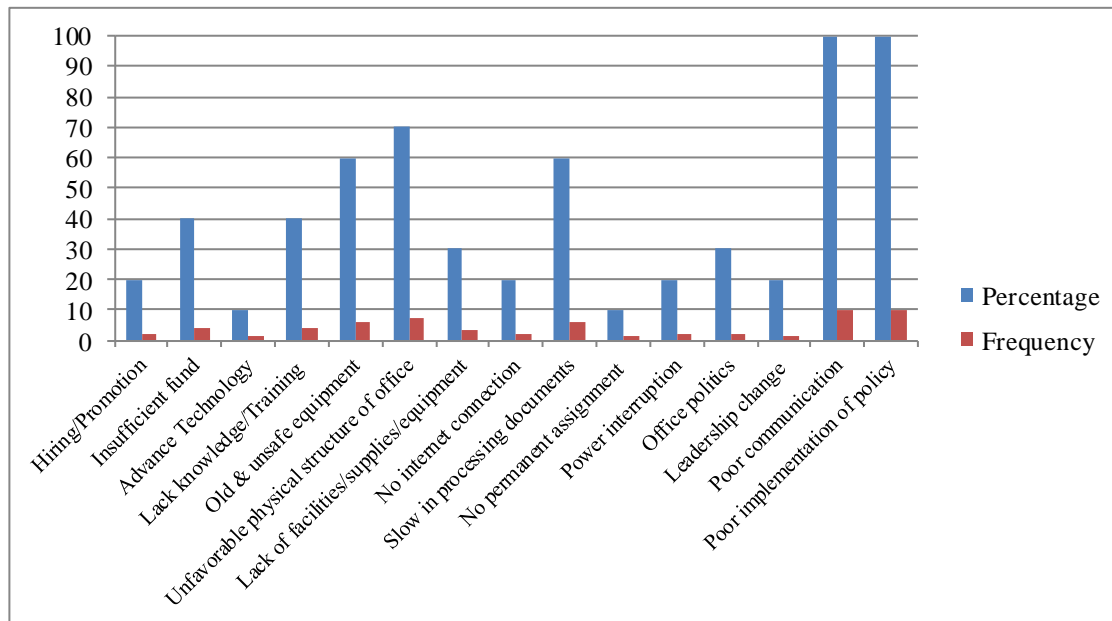


Figure 2. Issues and Problems meet in the internal operation and core process

On Internal Operation and Core Process: Based from the data in figure 2, it revealed that all the agency-respondents are suffering from poor communication and poor implementation of the policy. The problem on poor communication covers lack of dissemination of information that resulted to uninformed employees which eventually boil down to non-participation in activities, events and happenings inside the office. Other aspects that fall under poor communication are lack of proper coordination, lack of action to enforce cooperation and inconsistency of house policy. The respondents considered these aspects as product of poor communication in the workplace. Another issue and problem that bears significance is unfavorable physical structure of the office to which 70% of the agency-respondents are suffering from it. Also, 60% of the respondents confirmed that old/unsafe equipment and slow processing of documents remains unanswered and must be given attention by the management and administration. Further, 40% of agency-respondents considered insufficient funding and lack of knowledge and training of employees are another issues and problems of their agency concerned. The rest of the issues and problems identified under internal operation and core process have minimal effects in the agency-respondents. Three of the respondents agree that internal politics and lack of supplies, facilities and equipment bothers the operation of the office. Two agency respondents also said that leadership change, power interruption, internet connection and hiring/promotion are issues and problems that need to be addressed. Only one agency-respondent considered advance of technology and no permanent assignment of employees are additional issues and problems present in the office.

On Monitoring and Feedback Mechanism

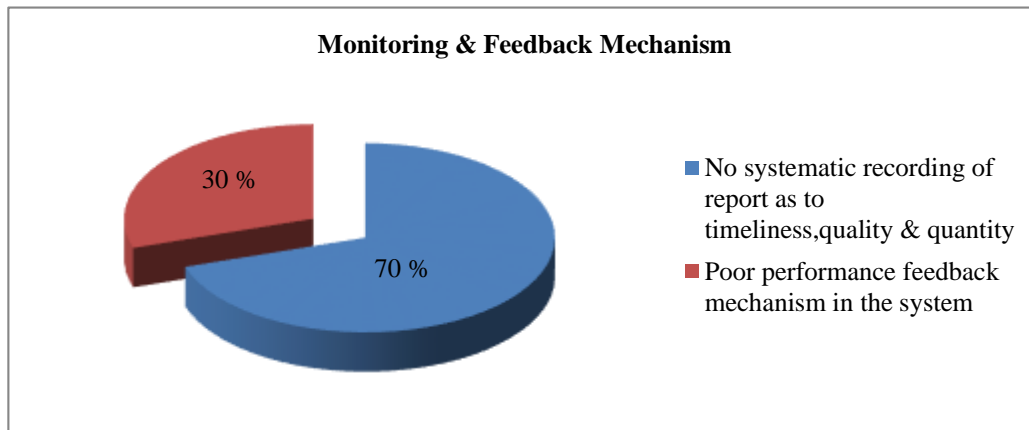


Figure 3. Issues and Problems identified in monitoring and feedback mechanism

The agency-respondents had identified two issue and problem under monitoring and feedback mechanism. Result in figure 3 shows 70% of the agency- respondents considered their agency to have a poor performance feedback mechanism and 30% likewise considered that absence of systematic recording of reports as to timeliness, quality and quantity is a prevalent issue and problem surfaced in the operation and management of the agency's affairs.

Effects in the management and performance of the agency: The identified common issues and problems on employee's relations and working attitude, internal operation and core process, and on monitoring and feedback mechanism have been considered by the company respondents to be negative factor in the management as well as in the performance of their respective offices towards achieving its mission and goals.

Issues and problem identified on employee's relation and working attitudes : The study revealed that understaffed is consider as the most pressing issue which resulted to overloading of responsibilities to few employees and this also produce overworked staff which cause pressure and fatigue. It was observed that overworked employee tends to become irritable and prone to committing errors. Overloading or overworked is unavoidable as claimed by the respondent's company since targets and deadlines have to be accomplished but the resulting outcome of this situation is poor service to the clientele. This kind of scenario is congruent with Koshla's ⁽¹⁾ write-ups which disclosed that almost 80% of working professionals, who put in extra hours, do not think it helps increases their productivity in any way.

In like manner, in a study released by ABC ⁽²⁾ news titled; US workers burnout, it revealed that overwork can also affect how employees do their jobs. The study pointed out that 17% who said they felt overworked also said they often made mistakes at work, compared with only 1% who said they did not feel overworked. Respondents who felt overworked also said they are more likely to look elsewhere for a new position, feel anger toward their employers and resent co-workers who don't work as hard as they do. This result is related to the present study where employees become irritable and with high risk of committing mistakes when they are overworked. 60% of the agency-respondents confirmed that tardiness/absenteeism and unprofessional employees affects the performance of their agency. They revealed that the direct negative effect in management is the decreased in productivity as it disrupts the routine on the office. It likewise added burden to co-workers and resentment grows that affects not only morale of the staff but also the performance and efficiency. This was affirmed by Saez that frequent absenteeism and tardiness can cause tension among co-workers. Employees who show up to work regularly and on time feel frustrated that a chronically late or absent employee is giving them an increased workload by forcing them to fill in. They may also pass judgment on the person's perceived laziness. This anger can be aggravated further if no disciplinary action is taken. Absenteeism/tardiness and unprofessionalism are relatedly inclined to the top acclaimed problem of all the agencies which is understaffed and this boil down to overworked employees which tend to become unprofessional in dealing with their clientele and so often they become late in coming to work and others commit to become absent to ease fatigue and stress. This was observed by the management and shared during the focus group discussion.

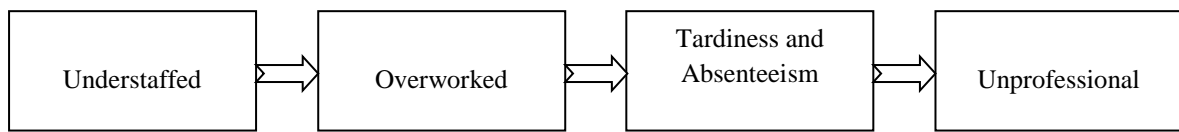


Figure 4. Casual connection effect concept

The observation by all of the agency-respondents explains the concept of the casual connection effect. It clearly explains that an agency who is understaffed would likelihood produced an overworked employee. This being so, as there will be re-distribution of additional workload and if these employees become overburden they will be resorting to absenteeism and tardiness to ease out fatigue and stress and the end result would be unprofessional employees.

On Internal operation and core process: The poor implementation of the policy and poor communication got the highest rank among the problems that provide greater negative effect in the management. These two identified issues resulted in the unwarranted failure meeting up the targets of the agency in which it provides negative impact in the government service. The unfavorable physical condition of the office ranks second as the worst problem identified. This has a negative effect in the day to day transaction in the office. Clients feel unsatisfied and become irritable as the workplace did not give any comfort.

On monitoring and feedback mechanism : The poor performance feedback mechanism in the system brings the most recognized problem that affect much the delivery of services to the public. It resulted to loosing so much financial assets of the agency as the projects being implemented went to uncertainty as the effect of it was never been recorded whether the same has brought benefits to the community hence monitoring was absence. If this becomes a customary event in every agency – this will eventually deprive many citizens of social needs that the government must have to deliver.

Probable solutions

After carefully reviewing the result of the study the following solutions are being offered;

- 1.1. Character building must be a regular activity in every government workplace. This is the most effective way of instilling self discipline and dedication to work hard as well as share a concern to somebody,
- 1.2. Quality assurance mechanism must be forced to all government agencies not only be limited to five mechanisms introduced by the Civil Service Commission but international system standards must be integrated,
- 1.3. The last phase of a development cycle must be a priority of any head of agency. Monitoring result is a must and be included in the monthly report of agency's head to ascertain that policies, programs and projects are properly monitored as to its effect to the public.

V FINDINGS

The result of the study reveals that the most pressing problems and issues of the selected agency in the province of Sorsogon covers the following; (a) understaffed, (b) poor communication, (c) poor implementation of the policy, and (d) poor performance feedback mechanism in the system.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the discussion and findings of the study, the researcher has proposed possible solutions that can be undertaken which was stated in the discussion. Apart from it, the following recommendations are likewise offered in order to improve the delivery of services to the clientele and the rest of the community.

1. The agency-respondent has to exert effort to establish a system to increase the personnel in order to avoid overworked human resources. This can be done through linkages and cooperation with other agencies for human resource sharing. Likewise, partnership to higher learning institution can be made and serves as an internship program implementer so that an intern can help augment human resources.
2. Investment in ICT can be prioritized. It will not only improved communication in the agency but will also resolve overworked employee's hence, ICT technology decreases human intervention.
3. Stringent monitoring of these agencies by the government watchdog such as the Civil Service Commission, the anti-graft and corrupt practices commission has to be imposed so that implementation of the policy will be religiously complied.

4. A reward system can be established for those agencies compliant and had institutionalized feedback mechanism in their respective system to motivate them from complying the same.

REFERENCES:

1. RA 9485, the Anti-Red Tape Act.
2. Administrative Code of the Philippines, (Executive Order 292) annotated, Renan E. Ramos.
3. SORECO Vision, Mission & Goals.
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juban,_Sorsogon.
5. Vharoni Khosla, Overworking doesn't add to productivity, The Economic Times, Feb. 14, 2017.
<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/overworking-doesnt-add-to-productivity-say-employees-study/articleshow/57142665.cms>.
6. U.S. Workers Burned Out by ABC News, New York, May 16, 2017
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=93295&page=1>.
7. Saez, Alex, The effect of absenteeism and tardiness on work.
<http://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/effect-absenteeism-tardiness-work-4991.html>.

Alberto Naag Naperi, Development Issues and Problems of Selected Agency in Sorsogon, An investigative study. Invention Journal of Research Technology in Engineering & Management (IJRTEM), 2(9), 84-89. Retrieved September 20, 2018, from www.ijrtem.com